

New phosphoramidate derivativesField of the invention.

The present invention relates to a new series of phosphoramidate derivatives, as well as to a process for their preparation, to the pharmaceutical compositions which comprise these compounds and to their use in medicine.

Background of the invention.

In recent years, new antiinflammatory drugs, the so called *coxibs* or cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) inhibitors, which intend to avoid the commonly described gastric effects of non-steroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), have reached the market. Both kinds of drugs act by inhibiting cyclooxygenase, which is an enzyme that takes part in the arachidonic acid cascade by catalyzing the formation of substances such as prostaglandins (PGE₂, PGD₂, PGF₂), prostacyclin (PGI₂) and thromboxane A₂ (TXA₂), substances that, due to their vasoactive and inflammatory properties, are involved in numerous inflammatory processes, both acute and chronic.

The great difference between both kinds of drugs lies on the cyclooxygenase isoform upon which they act. In the early 90's, two cyclooxygenase isoforms, COX-1 and COX-2, were described. COX-1 is the constitutive form, present in many tissues, but preferentially in the stomach, kidney and platelets. Its inhibition is responsible for the gastric, renal and antiplatelet effects of NSAIDs, given that it leads to a reduction in the levels of prostaglandins, which at gastric level play a key role in the protection of the mucosa. On the other hand, COX-2 is an inducible form which is expressed as a consequence of an inflammatory or mitogenic stimulus in a wide range of tissues such as macrophages, chondrocytes, fibroblasts and endothelial cells. Selective inhibition of this isoform, mechanism on which the *coxibs* are based, is expected to render drugs with improved gastric tolerance.

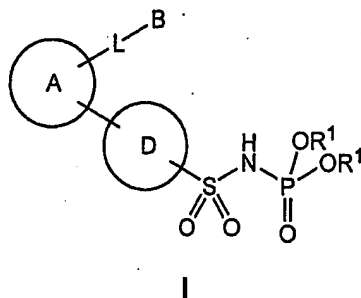
Furthermore, COX-2 inhibition has proved to be an effective mechanism for the treatment of pain, especially for the treatment of severe and moderate pain resulting for example from traumatisms, acute diseases or surgery.

In the treatment of severe and moderate pain, especially in hospitals, the use of parenteral formulations is preferred in order to achieve a more rapid onset of action. Despite the fact that an inappropriate management of post-operative

pain can lead to serious complications, long hospital stays, slower recoveries and an increase in the use of medications, its treatment is not solved at present in a satisfactory way. Thus, the use of the drugs currently available for this indication is limited due to the side effects with which they are associated: conventional NSAIDs are related to the above mentioned gastric and antiplatelet effects, while opioids, which are still more effective in the treatment of pain, are associated with sedating effects, constipation and respiratory depression. Moreover, most of the *coxibs* that are nowadays on the market or under development show water solubility values that do not contribute in any way to the development of injectable formulations. Thus, the present availability of injectable formulations for the treatment of pain is limited. Therefore, there remain a great need to find new compounds with antiinflammatory and analgesic activity which can be administered by parenteral route.

Description of the invention.

An aspect of the present invention relates to the new compounds of general formula I:



wherein:

each R¹ independently represents hydrogen, C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₆ haloalkyl, phenyl, heteroaryl or phenylC₁₋₃ alkyl, where all phenyl and heteroaryl rings can be optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ alkoxy groups, or both substituents R¹ may be taken together to form a saturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring, which can be optionally fused to a benzene ring;

A represents an unsaturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring which can optionally contain from 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S, where the substituents L and D are placed on adjacent atoms of ring A, and where additionally A can be optionally substituted with one or more substituents R²;

L represents a single bond, -O-, -S- or -NR³-;

B represents C₁₋₆ alkyl or a ring selected from phenyl, heteroaryl and C₃₋₇ cycloalkyl, where all said rings can be optionally substituted with one or more substituents R⁴;

- 5 D represents phenyl or pyridine, which can be both optionally substituted with one or more halogens;

the groups A and -SO₂NHP(O)(OR¹)₂ are placed on ring D in *para* position with respect to one another;

- each R² independently represents halogen, cyano, nitro, carboxy, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₂₋₄ alkenyl, C₂₋₄ alkynyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkyl, hydroxy, C₁₋₄ hydroxyalkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy, C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy, C₁₋₄ alkylthio, amino, C₁₋₄ alkylamino, C₁₋₄ dialkylamino, formyl, C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy carbonyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy carbonyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl, C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyloxyC₁₋₃ alkyl, C₃₋₇ cycloalkylC₁₋₄ alkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl or C₃₋₇ cycloalkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl, or two substituents R² on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group;
- 15

R³ represents hydrogen or C₁₋₄ alkyl;

- each R⁴ independently represents halogen, cyano, nitro, carboxy, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkyl, hydroxy, C₁₋₄ hydroxyalkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy, C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy, C₁₋₄ alkylthio, amino, C₁₋₄ alkylamino, C₁₋₄ dialkylamino, formyl, C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy carbonyl or C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy carbonyl, or two substituents R⁴ on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group, and additionally one of the substituents R⁴ can represent a saturated, unsaturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring which can optionally contain from 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S and which can be optionally substituted with one or more substituents R⁵;
- 20
- 25

each R⁵ independently represents halogen, hydroxy, nitro, cyano, amino, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy or C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl, or two substituents R⁵ on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group; and

- heteroaryl in the above definitions represents pyridine, pyrazine, pyrimidine or pyridazine.
- 30

The compounds of formula I are COX-2 inhibitors with good antiinflammatory and analgesic activity and moreover they are suitable for parenteral administration.

The present invention also relates to the salts of the compounds of formula

I, as well as to their solvates.

Some compounds of formula I can have chiral centres, which can give rise to various stereoisomers. The present invention relates to each one of the individual stereoisomers as well as to their mixtures. Moreover, some of the compounds of the present invention can show cis/trans isomery. The present invention relates to each one of the geometric isomers as well as to their mixtures.

Another aspect of the present invention relates to the pharmaceutical compositions which comprise an effective amount of a compound of formula I or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients.

Another aspect of the present invention relates to the use of a compound of formula I or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof for the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prevention of diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase, especially cyclooxygenase-2. Preferably, the diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase-2 are selected from inflammation, pain, fever, pathologies associated with prostanoid-induced smooth muscle contraction, preneoplastic disorders, cancer, cerebral infarction, epilepsy, type I diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases and vascular diseases with an inflammatory component. More preferably, the compounds of the present invention are useful for the treatment or prevention of a disorder selected from the group consisting of: pain resulting from surgery or dental surgery; low back and neck pain; headache; toothache; pain associated with cancer; neuralgia; arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile arthritis; degenerative joint diseases, including osteoarthritis; gout; ankylosing spondylitis; tendinitis; pain and/or inflammation associated with traumatismes such as sprains, strains and other similar injuries, such as those produced during sport performance; synovitis; myositis; dysmenorrhea; inflammatory bowel disease; ocular inflammatory diseases, including conjunctivitis and endophthalmitis; corneal transplants; skin inflammatory diseases, including psoriasis, burns, eczema and dermatitis; systemic inflammatory processes, including sepsis and pancreatitis; bursitis; lupus erythematosus; common cold; rheumatic fever; symptoms associated with influenza or other viral infections; preterm labour; asthma; bronchitis; familial adenomatous polyposis; cancer, including liver, bladder,

pancreas, ovary, prostate, cervix, lung, breast, skin cancer and gastrointestinal cancers such as colon cancer; cerebral infarction; epilepsy; type I diabetes; dementia, including Alzheimer's disease; Parkinson's disease; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; and atherosclerosis.

5 Another aspect of the present invention relates to a compound of formula I or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof for the treatment or prevention of diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase, especially cyclooxygenase-2. Preferably, the diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase-2 are selected from inflammation, pain, fever, pathologies associated with prostanoid-induced smooth
10 muscle contraction, preneoplastic disorders, cancer, cerebral infarction, epilepsy, type I diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases and vascular diseases with an inflammatory component. More preferably, the compounds of the present invention are useful for the treatment or prevention of a disorder selected from the group consisting of: pain resulting from surgery or dental surgery; low back
15 and neck pain; headache; toothache; pain associated with cancer; neuralgia; arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile arthritis; degenerative joint diseases, including osteoarthritis; gout; ankylosing spondylitis; tendinitis; pain and/or inflammation associated with traumatismes such as sprains, strains and other similar injuries, such as those produced during sport performance;
20 synovitis; myositis; dysmenorrhea; inflammatory bowel disease; ocular inflammatory diseases, including conjunctivitis and endophthalmitis; corneal transplants; skin inflammatory diseases, including psoriasis, burns, eczema and dermatitis; systemic inflammatory processes, including sepsis and pancreatitis; bursitis; lupus erythematosus; common cold; rheumatic fever; symptoms
25 associated with influenza or other viral infections; preterm labour; asthma; bronchitis; familial adenomatous polyposis; cancer, including liver, bladder, pancreas, ovary, prostate, cervix, lung, breast, skin cancer and gastrointestinal cancers such as colon cancer; cerebral infarction; epilepsy; type I diabetes; dementia, including Alzheimer's disease; Parkinson's disease; amyotrophic
30 lateral sclerosis; and atherosclerosis.

Another aspect of the present invention relates to the use of a compound of formula I or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof for the treatment or prevention of diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase, especially cyclooxygenase-2. Preferably, the diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase-2 are

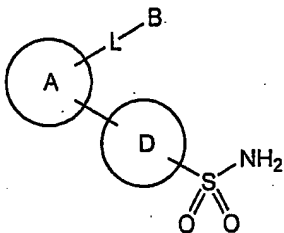
selected from inflammation, pain, fever, pathologies associated with prostanoid-induced smooth muscle contraction, preneoplastic disorders, cancer, cerebral infarction, epilepsy, type I diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases and vascular diseases with an inflammatory component. More preferably, the compounds of the present invention are useful for the treatment or prevention of a disorder selected from the group consisting of: pain resulting from surgery or dental surgery; low back and neck pain; headache; toothache; pain associated with cancer; neuralgia; arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile arthritis; degenerative joint diseases, including osteoarthritis; gout; ankylosing spondylitis; tendinitis; pain and/or inflammation associated with traumatisms such as sprains, strains and other similar injuries, such as those produced during sport performance; synovitis; myositis; dysmenorrhea; inflammatory bowel disease; ocular inflammatory diseases, including conjunctivitis and endophthalmitis; corneal transplants; skin inflammatory diseases, including psoriasis, burns, eczema and dermatitis; systemic inflammatory processes, including sepsis and pancreatitis; bursitis; lupus erythematosus; common cold; rheumatic fever; symptoms associated with influenza or other viral infections; preterm labour; asthma; bronchitis; familial adenomatous polyposis; cancer, including liver, bladder, pancreas, ovary, prostate, cervix, lung, breast, skin cancer and gastrointestinal cancers such as colon cancer; cerebral infarction; epilepsy; type I diabetes; dementia, including Alzheimer's disease; Parkinson's disease; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; and atherosclerosis.

Another aspect of the present invention relates to a method of treating or preventing diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase, especially cyclooxygenase-2, in a subject in need thereof, especially a human being, which comprises administering to said subject a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula I or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or solvate thereof. Preferably, the diseases mediated by cyclooxygenase-2 are selected from inflammation, pain, fever, pathologies associated with prostanoid-induced smooth muscle contraction, preneoplastic disorders, cancer, cerebral infarction, epilepsy, type I diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases and vascular diseases with an inflammatory component. More preferably, the compounds of the present invention are useful for the treatment or prevention of a disorder selected from the group consisting of: pain resulting from surgery or dental surgery; low back

and neck pain; headache; toothache; pain associated with cancer; neuralgia; arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile arthritis; degenerative joint diseases, including osteoarthritis; gout; ankylosing spondylitis; tendinitis; pain and/or inflammation associated with traumatism such as sprains, strains and other similar injuries, such as those produced during sport performance; synovitis; myositis; dysmenorrhea; inflammatory bowel disease; ocular inflammatory diseases, including conjunctivitis and endophthalmitis; corneal transplants; skin inflammatory diseases, including psoriasis, burns, eczema and dermatitis; systemic inflammatory processes, including sepsis and pancreatitis; bursitis; lupus erythematosus; common cold; rheumatic fever; symptoms associated with influenza or other viral infections; preterm labour; asthma; bronchitis; familial adenomatous polyposis; cancer, including liver, bladder, pancreas, ovary, prostate, cervix, lung, breast, skin cancer and gastrointestinal cancers such as colon cancer; cerebral infarction; epilepsy; type I diabetes; dementia, including Alzheimer's disease; Parkinson's disease; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; and atherosclerosis.

Another aspect of the present invention relates to a process for preparing a compound of formula I, which comprises:

(a) when in a compound of formula I each R^1 is different from hydrogen, reacting a sulfonamide of formula II



II

wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described above, with a compound of formula III

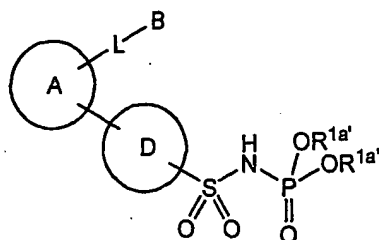


III

wherein X represents H or Cl and wherein each R^{1a} independently represents any of the meanings described above for R^1 except for hydrogen, in the presence of a base, or alternatively, reacting a sulfonamide of formula II in which the group

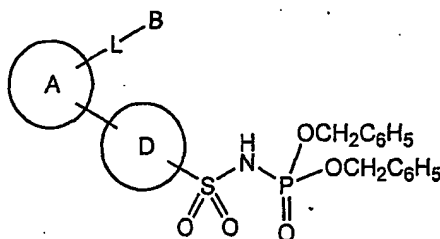
-SO₂NH₂ is in anionic form with a compound of formula III;

(b) when in a compound of formula I each R¹ represents hydrogen, hydrolysing a compound of formula Ia'



Ia'

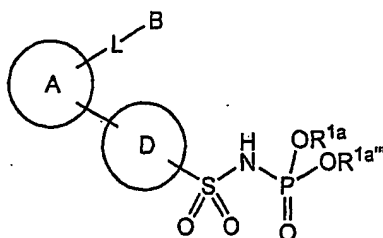
5. wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described above and wherein R^{1a'} represents any of the meanings described above for R¹ except for hydrogen and benzyl, or alternatively, hydrogenating a compound of formula Ia''



Ia''

wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described above;

- 10 (c) when in a compound of formula I one of the substituents R¹ represents hydrogen and the other is different from hydrogen, monodealkylating a compound of formula Ia'''



Ia'''

- 15 wherein A, L, B, D and R^{1a} have the meaning described above and wherein R^{1a'''} represents C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₆ haloalkyl or phenylC₁₋₃ alkyl, where the phenyl group can be optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ alkoxy groups;

(d) transforming, in one or a plurality of steps, a compound of formula I into another compound of formula I; and

(e) if desired, after the above steps, reacting a compound of formula I with a base or an acid to give the corresponding addition salt.

5 In the above definitions, the term C₁₋₃, C₁₋₄ or C₁₋₆ alkyl, as a group or part of a group, means a linear or branched alkyl group that contains from 1 to 3, from 1 to 4 or from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, respectively. Examples include among others the groups methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, isobutyl, *sec*-butyl, *tert*-butyl, pentyl, isopentyl, neopentyl and hexyl.

10 A C₂₋₄ alkenyl group means a linear or branched alkyl chain that contains from 2 to 4 carbon atoms, and that in addition contains one or more double bonds. Examples include among others the groups ethenyl, 1-propenyl, 2-propenyl, isopropenyl, 1-butenyl, 2-butenyl, 3-butenyl and 1,3-butadienyl.

 A C₂₋₄ alkynyl group means a linear or branched alkyl chain that contains
15 from 2 to 4 carbon atoms, and that in addition contains one or more triple bonds. Examples include among others the groups ethynyl, 1-propynyl, 2-propynyl, 1-butynyl, 2-butynyl and 3-butynyl.

 A halogen radical or its abbreviation halo means fluoro, chloro, bromo or iodo.

20 A C₁₋₄ or C₁₋₆ haloalkyl group means a group resulting from the substitution of one or more hydrogen atoms of a C₁₋₄ or C₁₋₆ alkyl group, respectively, with one or more halogen atoms (that is fluoro, chloro, bromo or iodo), which can be the same or different. Examples include among others the groups trifluoromethyl, fluoromethyl, 1-chloroethyl, 2-chloroethyl, 1-fluoroethyl, 2-fluoroethyl, 2-bromoethyl, 2-iodoethyl, 2,2,2-trifluoroethyl, pentafluoroethyl, 3-fluoropropyl, 3-chloropropyl,
25 2,2,3,3-tetrafluoropropyl, 2,2,3,3,3-pentafluoropropyl, heptafluoropropyl, 4-fluorobutyl, nonafluorobutyl, 5-fluoropentyl and 6-fluorohexyl.

 A C₁₋₄ hydroxyalkyl group means a group resulting from the substitution of one or more hydrogen atoms of a C₁₋₄ alkyl group with one or more hydroxy
30 groups. Examples include among others hydroxymethyl, 1-hydroxyethyl, 2-hydroxyethyl, 3-hydroxypropyl and 4-hydroxybutyl.

 A phenylC₁₋₃ alkyl group means a group resulting from the substitution of a hydrogen atom of a C₁₋₃ alkyl group with a phenyl group (wherein said phenyl ring can be optionally substituted as described above in the definition of R¹).

Examples include among others the groups benzyl, 1-phenylethyl, 2-phenylethyl, 1-phenylpropyl, 2-phenylpropyl and 3-phenylpropyl, and the corresponding groups where the phenyl ring is substituted.

5 A C₁₋₄ alkoxy group means a group resulting from attaching a C₁₋₄ alkyl group to an ether-type oxygen atom. Examples thereof are the groups methoxy, ethoxy, propoxy, isopropoxy, butoxy, isobutoxy, *sec*-butoxy and *tert*-butoxy.

10 A C₁₋₄ alkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl group means a group resulting from the substitution of a hydrogen atom of a C₁₋₃ alkyl group with a C₁₋₄ alkoxy group as defined above. Examples include among others methoxymethyl, ethoxymethyl, propoxymethyl, isopropoxymethyl, 2-(methoxy)ethyl, 2-(ethoxy)ethyl and 3-(methoxy)propyl.

15 A C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy group means a group resulting from the substitution of one or more hydrogen atoms of a C₁₋₄ alkoxy group with one or more halogen atoms, which can be the same or different. Examples include among others trifluoromethoxy, fluoromethoxy, 1-chloroethoxy, 2-chloroethoxy, 1-fluoroethoxy, 2-fluoroethoxy, 2-bromoethoxy, 2-iodoethoxy, 2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy, pentafluoroethoxy, 3-fluoropropoxy, 3-chloropropoxy, 2,2,3,3-tetrafluoropropoxy, 2,2,3,3,3-pentafluoropropoxy, heptafluoropropoxy, 4-fluorobutoxy and nonafluorobutoxy.

20 A C₁₋₄ alkylamino or C₁₋₄ dialkylamino group represents a group resulting from the substitution of one or two hydrogen atoms respectively of an amino group with one or two C₁₋₄ alkyl groups, which can be the same or different. Examples include among others methylamino, dimethylamino, ethylamino, diethylamino, ethylmethylamino, propylamino, dipropylamino, isopropylamino, diisopropylamino and butylamino.

25 A C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl group means a group resulting from attaching a C₁₋₄ alkyl group to a carbonyl group. Examples thereof include among others the groups methylcarbonyl, ethylcarbonyl, propylcarbonyl, isopropylcarbonyl, butylcarbonyl, isobutylcarbonyl, *sec*-butylcarbonyl and *tert*-butylcarbonyl.

30 A C₁₋₄ alkoxy carbonyl group means a group resulting from attaching a C₁₋₄ alkoxy group to a carbonyl group. Examples thereof include among others the groups methoxycarbonyl, ethoxycarbonyl, propoxycarbonyl, isopropoxycarbonyl, butoxycarbonyl, isobutoxycarbonyl, *sec*-butoxycarbonyl and *tert*-butoxycarbonyl.

A C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy carbonyl group means a group resulting from attaching a

C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy group to a carbonyl group. Examples include among others trifluoromethoxycarbonyl, fluoromethoxycarbonyl, 1-chloroethoxycarbonyl, 2-chloroethoxycarbonyl, 1-fluoroethoxycarbonyl, 2-fluoroethoxycarbonyl, 2-bromoethoxycarbonyl, 2-iodoethoxycarbonyl, 2,2,2-trifluoroethoxycarbonyl, 5 pentafluoroethoxycarbonyl, 3-fluoropropoxycarbonyl, 3-chloropropoxycarbonyl, 2,2,3,3-tetrafluoropropoxycarbonyl, 2,2,3,3,3-pentafluoropropoxycarbonyl, heptafluoropropoxycarbonyl, 4-fluorobutoxycarbonyl and nonafluorobutoxycarbonyl.

A C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyloxy group (that is, a group C₁₋₄ alkylCOO-) means a 10 group resulting from attaching a C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl group as defined above to an oxygen atom. Examples thereof include among others the groups methylcarbonyloxy, ethylcarbonyloxy, propylcarbonyloxy, isopropylcarbonyloxy, butylcarbonyloxy, isobutylcarbonyloxy, sec-butylcarbonyloxy and *tert*-butylcarbonyloxy.

A C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyloxyC₁₋₃ alkyl group means a group resulting from the 15 substitution of a hydrogen atom of a C₁₋₃ alkyl group with a C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyloxy group as defined above. Examples include among others the groups methylcarbonyloxymethyl, ethylcarbonyloxymethyl, propylcarbonyloxymethyl, isopropylcarbonyloxymethyl, butylcarbonyloxymethyl, isobutylcarbonyloxymethyl, 20 sec-butylcarbonyloxymethyl, *tert*-butylcarbonyloxymethyl, 2-(methylcarbonyloxy)ethyl and 3-(methylcarbonyloxy)propyl.

A C₁₋₄ alkylthio group means a group resulting from attaching a C₁₋₄ alkyl 25 group to a thioether-type sulfur atom. Examples thereof include among others the groups methylthio, ethylthio, propylthio, isopropylthio, butylthio, isobutylthio, sec-butylthio and *tert*-butylthio.

The term C₃₋₇ cycloalkyl, as a group or part of a group, represents cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl or cycloheptyl.

A C₃₋₇ cycloalkoxy group represents a group resulting from attaching a C₃₋₇ 30 cycloalkyl group as defined above to an ether-type oxygen atom. Examples thereof include the groups cyclopropoxy, cyclobutoxy, cyclopentyloxy, cyclohexyloxy and cycloheptyloxy.

A C₃₋₇ cycloalkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl group represents a group resulting from the substitution of a hydrogen atom of a C₁₋₃ alkyl group with a C₃₋₇ cycloalkoxy group as defined above. Examples thereof include among others the groups

cyclopropoxymethyl, cyclobutoxymethyl, cyclopentyloxymethyl, cyclohexyloxymethyl, cycloheptyloxymethyl, 2-(cyclopropoxy)ethyl and 3-(cyclopropoxy)propyl.

5 A C₃₋₇ cycloalkylC₁₋₄ alkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl group represents a group resulting from the substitution of a hydrogen atom of a C₁₋₄ alkoxy group that belongs to a C₁₋₄ alkoxyC₁₋₃ alkyl group with a C₃₋₇ cycloalkyl group as defined above. Examples include among others the groups cyclopropylmethoxymethyl and cyclobutylmethoxymethyl.

10 The term unsaturated ring refers to a ring that possesses in its structure the highest possible number of double bonds.

The term partially unsaturated ring refers to a ring that possesses at least one double bond in its structure but that does not possess the highest possible number of double bonds.

The term oxo means a carbonyl group.

15 In the compounds of formula I, R¹ independently represents hydrogen, C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₆ haloalkyl, phenyl, heteroaryl or phenylC₁₋₃ alkyl, where the phenyl (either in the phenyl group or in the phenylC₁₋₃ alkyl group) and heteroaryl rings can be optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ alkoxy groups. Additionally, both substituents R¹ can be taken together to form with the
20 P atom and the two O atoms to which the R¹ groups are bound a saturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring. Said ring cannot contain in its structure more heteroatoms than the P atom and the two O atoms bound to R¹ depicted in formula I, and can be optionally fused to a benzene ring through any available carbon-carbon bond in its structure. Examples of said ring include,
25 among others, [1,3,2]dioxaphospholane, [1,3,2]dioxaphosphinane and benzo[1,3,2]dioxaphosphole. Among all the meanings described for R¹, R¹ preferably represents hydrogen, C₁₋₆ alkyl or phenyl (where the phenyl group can be optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ alkoxy groups).

30 In the compounds of the present invention, ring A represents an unsaturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring which can be carbocyclic or heterocyclic, in which case it can contain from 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S. The L and D substituents are placed on adjacent atoms of ring A. Ring A can be substituted with L and D alone, or additionally can

have one or more, preferably from one to four, more preferably from one to two, substituents R^2 , which can be the same or different and which can be placed on any available position of ring A, that is, either on a carbon atom or on an available nitrogen atom in the case of heterocyclic rings. Preferred examples of ring A include imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4*H*-pyran, 2*H*-pyran, cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole and 4,5-dihydropyrazole, of which imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran and 4*H*-pyran are more preferred, imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole and oxazole are still more preferred and imidazole is especially preferred.

As defined above, each R^2 independently represents halogen, cyano, nitro, carboxy, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{2-4} alkenyl, C_{2-4} alkynyl, C_{1-4} haloalkyl, hydroxy, C_{1-4} hydroxyalkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy, C_{1-4} haloalkoxy, C_{1-4} alkylthio, amino, C_{1-4} alkylamino, C_{1-4} dialkylamino, formyl, C_{1-4} alkylcarbonyl, C_{1-4} alkoxycarbonyl, C_{1-4} haloalkoxycarbonyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy C_{1-3} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkylcarbonyloxy C_{1-3} alkyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkyl C_{1-4} alkoxy C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{3-7} cycloalkoxy C_{1-3} alkyl. Moreover, two substituents R^2 on the same carbon atom may be taken together to form an oxo group.

Although ring A can be optionally substituted with one or more substituents R^2 as defined above, examples of preferred substituents R^2 include halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} haloalkyl and oxo. As preferred examples of ring A substituted with one or more substituents R^2 , the groups 4-chloroimidazole, 3-trifluoromethylpyrazole, 3-difluoromethylpyrazole, 5-methylisoxazole, 2-methyloxazole, 2-methylthiazole, 3*H*-2-oxazolone, 5*H*-2-furanone, 2-bromothiophene, 3-chloropyridine, 4*H*-4-pyranone, 2*H*-2-pyranone and 4*H*-3-methyl-4-pyranone can be mentioned, of which 4-chloroimidazole, 3-trifluoromethylpyrazole, 5-methylisoxazole and 2-methyloxazole are more preferred, and 4-chloroimidazole is especially preferred.

L can represent a single bond, -O-, -S- or -NR³-, but preferably represents a single bond or -O-, and more preferably represents a single bond.

In the compounds of the present invention, B can represent C_{1-6} alkyl or a ring selected from phenyl, heteroaryl and C_{3-7} cycloalkyl. When B represents phenyl, heteroaryl or C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, these rings can be optionally substituted with one or more, preferably one to three, substituents R^4 as defined above, which can be the same or different and which can be placed on any available position of ring B. When L represents a single bond, B preferably represents a phenyl,

heteroaryl or C₃₋₇ cycloalkyl group optionally substituted with one to three substituents R⁴, more preferably B represents either phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R⁴ or cyclohexyl, and still more preferably B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R⁴. When L represents -O-,
5 B preferably represents either C₁₋₆ alkyl or phenyl optionally substituted with one to three substituents R⁴, and more preferably B represents isopropyl or phenyl optionally substituted with one to three substituents R⁴.

As defined above, R⁴ can represent halogen, cyano, nitro, carboxy, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ haloalkyl, hydroxy, C₁₋₄ hydroxyalkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy, C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy, C₁₋₄ alkylthio, amino, C₁₋₄ alkylamino, C₁₋₄ dialkylamino, formyl, C₁₋₄ alkylcarbonyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy carbonyl or C₁₋₄ haloalkoxy carbonyl. Additionally, two substituents R⁴ on
10 the same carbon atom may be taken together to form an oxo substituent. Additionally, one of the substituents R⁴ can represent a saturated, unsaturated or partially unsaturated 5- or 6-membered ring, which can be carbocyclic or heterocyclic, in which case it can contain from 1 to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S. When R⁴ represents one of said rings, these can be optionally substituted with one or more, preferably one to three, substituents R⁵ as defined
15 above, which can be the same or different and which can be placed on any available position of the ring, either on a carbon atom or on a nitrogen atom in the case of heterocyclic rings. Examples of R⁴ rings include among others benzene, pyridine, piperidine, pyrrolidine, pyrroline, oxazolidine, pyrrole and imidazole, among which pyrrolidine is a preferred group. Among all the possible meanings for R⁴, the groups halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy and C₁₋₄ haloalkyl are preferred.
20

In the compounds of the present invention D represents phenyl or pyridine,
25 which can be optionally substituted with one or more, preferably one, halogen atoms, which can be the same or different and can be on any available position of ring D. The groups A and -SO₂NHP(O)(OR¹)₂ are always placed on ring D in *para* position with respect to one another. Fluoro is the halogen preferred as ring D substituent. Preferably, D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom or D is pyridine, more preferably D is phenyl optionally substituted with a
30 fluoro atom and still more preferably D is phenyl.

Although the present invention includes all the compounds mentioned above, those compounds of formula I wherein A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4H-pyran,

cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole or 4,5-dihydropyrazole, which can be optionally substituted with one to four substituents R^2 , as well as the salts and solvates thereof, are preferred.

Another preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those
5 compounds of formula I wherein:

A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4*H*-pyran, cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole or 4,5-dihydropyrazole, which can be optionally substituted with one to four substituents R^2 ; and

10 D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom;
and the salts and solvates thereof.

Another preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-
15 dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4*H*-pyran, cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole or 4,5-dihydropyrazole, which can be optionally substituted with one to four substituents R^2 ;

D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom;

L represents a single bond; and

20 B represents phenyl, heteroaryl or C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, which can all be optionally substituted with one to three groups R^4 ;
and the salts and solvates thereof.

Another preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

25 A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4*H*-pyran, cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole or 4,5-dihydropyrazole, which can be optionally substituted with one to four substituents R^2 ;

each R^2 independently represents halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl or C_{1-4} haloalkyl, or
30 two substituents R^2 on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group;

D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom;

L represents a single bond; and

B represents phenyl, heteroaryl or C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, which can all be

optionally substituted with one to three groups R^4 ;
and the salts and solvates thereof.

Another preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

5 A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4*H*-pyran, cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole or 4,5-dihydropyrazole, which can be optionally substituted with one to four substituents R^2 ;

each R^2 independently represents halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl or C_{1-4} haloalkyl, or
10 two substituents R^2 on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group;

D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom;

L represents a single bond; and

B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R^4 , or
15 B represents cyclohexyl;
and the salts and solvates thereof.

Another preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

20 A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4*H*-pyran, cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole or 4,5-dihydropyrazole, which can be optionally substituted with one to four substituents R^2 ;

each R^2 independently represents halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl or C_{1-4} haloalkyl, or
25 two substituents R^2 on the same carbon atom can be taken together to form an oxo group;

D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom;

L represents a single bond;

B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R^4 , or
B represents cyclohexyl; and
30 each R^4 independently represents halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy or C_{1-4} haloalkyl;
and the salts and solvates thereof.

Another preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole, oxazole, thiazole, 2,5-dihydrofuran, thiophene, pyridine, 4*H*-pyran, cyclopentene, 2,3-dihydrooxazole or 4,5-dihydropyrazole, which can be optionally substituted with one to four substituents R²;

5 D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom;

L represents -O- ; and

B represents C₁₋₆ alkyl or phenyl optionally substituted with one to three substituents R⁴;

and the salts and solvates thereof.

10 Another preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

A represents 4*H*-4-pyranone optionally substituted with one or two substituents R²;

D represents phenyl;

15 L represents -O- ;

B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three substituents R⁴; and

each R⁴ independently represents halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₄ alkoxy or C₁₋₄ haloalkyl;

20 and the salts and solvates thereof.

Another preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

A represents 5*H*-2-furanone optionally substituted with one or two substituents R²;

25 D represents phenyl;

L represents -O- ; and

B represents isopropyl;

and the salts and solvates thereof.

30 A more preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula I wherein:

A represents imidazole, pyrazole, isoxazole or oxazole, which can be optionally substituted with one or two substituents R²;

each R² independently represents halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ haloalkyl;

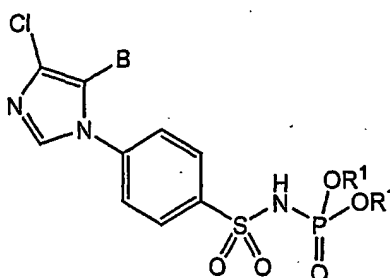
D represents phenyl optionally substituted with a fluoro atom;

L represents a single bond;

B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R^4 or B represents cyclohexyl; and

each R^4 independently represents halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy or C_{1-4} haloalkyl;
 5 and the salts and solvates thereof.

A still more preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula **Id**:



Id

10 wherein:

B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R^4 ; and each R^4 independently represents halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy or C_{1-4} haloalkyl;
 and the salts and solvates thereof.

15 An even more preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula **Id** wherein:

B represents phenyl optionally substituted with one to three groups R^4 ; each R^4 independently represents halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy or C_{1-4} haloalkyl; and

20 each R^1 independently represents hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl or phenyl optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl or C_{1-4} alkoxy groups; and the salts and solvates thereof.

An especially preferred class of compounds of the present invention are those compounds of formula **Id** wherein:

25 B represents 3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl; and

each R^1 independently represents hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl or phenyl optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C_{1-4} alkyl or C_{1-4} alkoxy groups; and the salts and solvates thereof.

In a particularly preferred embodiment of the invention, the compound of formula I is N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid and the salts and solvates thereof.

In the above definitions of preferred embodiments of the invention, when
5 the meaning of a certain substituent is not specified it means that said substituent has the same meaning as in formula I.

The compounds of the present invention contain one or more acid protons and in some cases can contain one or more basic nitrogens and, consequently, they can form salts with organic and inorganic bases and acids, which are also
10 included in the present invention. There is no limitation on the nature of said salts, provided that, when used for therapeutic purposes, they are pharmaceutically acceptable. Examples of said salts include: salts with inorganic cations such as sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, lithium, aluminum, zinc, etc; salts formed with pharmaceutically acceptable amines such as ammonia,
15 alkylamines, hydroxyalkylamines, lysine, arginine, *N*-methylglucamine, procaine and the like; salts with inorganic acids such as hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, hydriodic acid, nitric acid, perchloric acid, sulfuric acid or phosphoric acid; and salts with organic acids, such as methanesulfonic acid, trifluoromethanesulfonic acid, ethanesulfonic acid, benzenesulfonic acid, *p*-
20 toluenesulfonic acid, fumaric acid, oxalic acid, acetic acid or maleic acid, among others. The salts can be prepared by conventional methods, for example from a compound of formula I by treatment with a sufficient amount of the desired base or acid to give the salt in a conventional manner, or from a salt previously obtained from a compound of formula I, by ion exchange, using an ion exchange
25 resin. The compounds of formula I and their salts differ in certain physical properties, such as solubility, but they are equivalent for the purposes of the invention.

Some compounds of the present invention can exist in solvated form, including hydrated forms. In general, the solvated forms, with pharmaceutically
30 acceptable solvents such as water, ethanol and the like, are equivalent to the unsolvated form for the purposes of the invention.

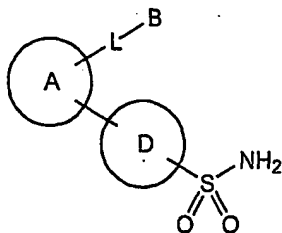
Some compounds of the present invention may exist as various diastereoisomers and/or various optical isomers. Diastereoisomers can be separated by conventional techniques such as chromatography or fractional

crystallization. The optical isomers can be resolved using conventional techniques of optical resolution, to give the optically pure isomers. This resolution can be performed upon any chiral synthetic intermediate or upon the products of general formula I. The optically pure isomers can also be individually obtained
5 using enantioselective synthesis. The present invention covers both the individual isomers and the mixtures (for example racemic mixtures), whether obtained by synthesis or by physically mixing them up.

Furthermore, some of the compounds of the present invention can exhibit cis/trans isomerism. The present invention includes each one of the geometric
10 isomers as well as the mixtures thereof.

The present invention also provides a process for the preparation of the compounds of formula I. As it will be obvious to a person skilled in the art, the precise method used for the preparation of a given compound can vary depending on its chemical structure. Furthermore, in some of the processes that
15 are explained below it may be necessary or advisable to protect the reactive or labile groups using conventional protecting groups. Both the nature of said protecting groups and the processes for their introduction and removal are well known and belong to the state of the art (see for example Greene T.W. and Wuts P.G.M., "Protective Groups in Organic Synthesis", John Wiley & Sons, 3rd edition,
20 1999). Whenever a protecting group is present, a later deprotection step will be necessary, which is performed under standard conditions, such as those described in the reference above mentioned.

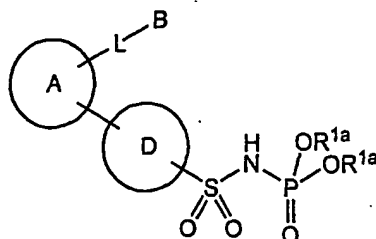
The compounds of the present invention are generally obtained from a sulfonamide of formula II,



II

25 wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described above. Said sulfonamide is transformed into the desired compound of formula I by chemical processes that generally are carried out in one, two or three steps as needed.

Thus, the compounds of formula I where each R^1 is different from hydrogen (that is, compounds of formula Ia)



Ia

- 5 wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described above and wherein each R^{1a} independently represents any of the meanings described above for R^1 except for hydrogen, can be obtained by condensation of a sulfonamide of formula II with a compound of formula III



III

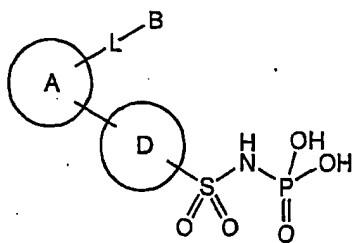
- wherein X represents H or chloro and R^{1a} has the meaning described above, in the presence of a base such as NaOH or KOH and in a suitable solvent such as a polar solvent, for example tetrahydrofuran, dimethoxyethane or acetonitrile, when
 15 X represents Cl, or in a halogenated solvent such as carbon tetrachloride or chloroform when X represents hydrogen. The reaction is carried out between 0 °C and reflux, preferably between 0 °C and room temperature when X represents hydrogen.

- Alternatively, this transformation can be carried out in two steps, forming
 20 first the salt of the sulfonamide of formula II by treatment with one equivalent of a base such as NaOH or KOH, in a suitable solvent such as a polar hydroxylic solvent, for example ethanol or isopropanol, and reacting in a second step the salt obtained with a compound of formula III, in a inert polar solvent such as tetrahydrofuran, dimethoxyethane or acetonitrile when X represents Cl, or in a
 25 halogenated solvent such as carbon tetrachloride or chloroform when X represents hydrogen. The process is carried out between 0 °C and reflux.

The compounds of formula III are commercially available, such as dimethyl chlorophosphate, diethyl chlorophosphate, diphenyl chlorophosphate, diphenyl

phosphate, 2-chloro[1,3,2]dioxaphospholane 2-oxide and 2-chlorobenzo[1,3,2]dioxaphosphole 2-oxide, or they can be obtained by methods widely described in the literature for this kind of compounds, for example by reaction of POCl_3 or PCl_3 with the desired alcohol or alcohols (when the two groups R^1 are different, in which case the reaction is carried out by adding the two alcohols in successive steps) in the presence of a base such as triethylamine or N-methylmorpholine in an aprotic solvent such as for example a halogenated solvent, benzene or toluene.

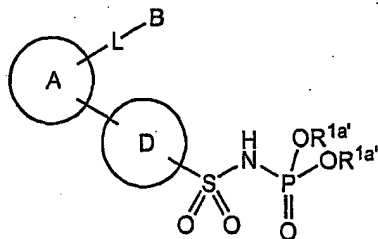
The compounds of formula I where each R^1 represents hydrogen (that is, compounds of formula Ib)



Ib

wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described above, can be obtained in general from a phosphodiester of formula Ia by removal of the group R^{1a} .

When R^{1a} represents any of the meanings described above for R^1 except for hydrogen and benzyl (that is R^{1a}), the compounds of formula Ib can be obtained by hydrolysis of a compound of formula Ia'

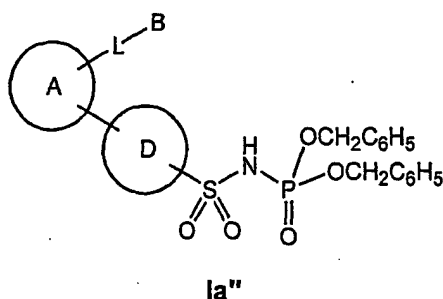


Ia'

wherein A, L, B, D and R^{1a} have the meaning described above. In general the transformation is carried out by treating the phosphodiester first with a suitable reagent for the hydrolysis of phosphodiesters such as bromotrimethylsilane or iodotrimethylsilane in an inert solvent such as dichloromethane or acetonitrile and

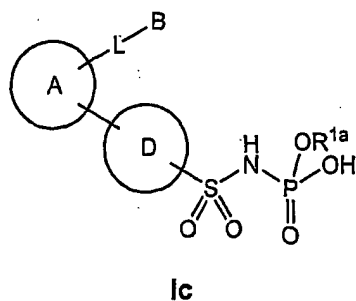
then with an acetone/water mixture. This reaction is carried out at a temperature comprised between 0 °C and reflux, preferably at a temperature comprised between 0 °C and room temperature.

In the case of benzyl phosphodiester, that is, when R^{1a} represents benzyl, the compounds of formula Ib can be obtained by hydrogenation of a benzyl phosphodiester of formula Ia'',



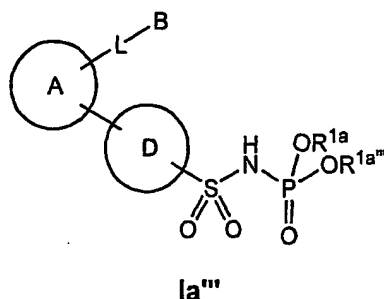
wherein A, L, B and D have the meaning described above. This reaction is carried out in the presence of a catalyst such as Pd/C, in a suitable solvent such as an alcohol, for example methanol or ethanol, and at a temperature comprised between 0 °C and reflux, preferably at room temperature.

Moreover, compounds of formula I where one of the substituents R¹ represents hydrogen and the other is different from hydrogen (that is, compounds of formula Ic)



wherein A, L, B, D and R^{1a} have the meaning described above, can also be obtained by monodealkylation of a phosphodiester of formula Ia where at least one of the groups R^{1a} represents an alkyl-type group (that is, a compound of formula Ia''')

24



Ia'''

wherein A, L, B, D and R^{1a} have the meaning described above and R^{1a'''} represents C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₆ haloalkyl or phenylC₁₋₃ alkyl (where the phenyl ring can be optionally substituted with one or more halogen, C₁₋₄ alkyl or C₁₋₄ alkoxy groups). This reaction is carried out by treating said phosphodiester Ia''' with a suitable reagent for the monodealkylation of phosphodiesters, for example a iodine salt such as sodium iodide or potassium iodide, in a suitable solvent such as acetone and at a temperature comprised between room temperature and reflux, preferably at reflux. Given that the product resulting from the reaction is a sodium or potassium salt depending on the reagent used, the compound of formula Ic can then be obtained by treatment of the salt obtained with an acid, for example an inorganic acid such as for example hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, hydriodic acid, nitric acid, perchloric acid, sulfuric acid or phosphoric acid, or with an organic acid such as for example methanesulfonic acid, trifluoromethanesulfonic acid, ethanesulfonic acid, benzenesulfonic acid, *p*-toluenesulfonic acid, fumaric acid, oxalic acid, acetic acid or maleic acid, among others.

Moreover, the compounds of formula I can also be obtained by interconversion from another compound of formula I. For example, a compound of formula Ib can be converted into a compound of formula Ia by esterification, or a compound of formula Ia can be interconverted into another compound of formula Ia by introduction of a substituent R² onto the corresponding compound Ia where ring A is unsubstituted, or by transformation of a substituent R² or R⁴ into another group R² or R⁴, respectively, in one or a plurality of steps, using standard reactions in heterocyclic chemistry, widely described in the literature.

The starting sulfonamides of formula II can be obtained according to methods widely described in the literature, such as for example those described

in the following references: WO 00/23426 for the preparation, among others, of compounds where A is imidazole, WO 95/15316 for the preparation of compounds where A is pyrazole, WO 96/25405 for the preparation of compounds where A is isoxazole, WO 97/34882 for the preparation of compounds where A is 3H-2-oxazolone, EP 745596 for the preparation of compounds where A is oxazole, WO 95/11883 for the preparation of compounds where A is cyclopentene, WO 96/03392 for the preparation of compounds where A is thiazole, WO 00/18753 and WO 01/68633 for the preparation of compounds where A is 4H-4-pyranone, WO 03/006451 for the preparation of compounds where A is 2H-2-pyranone, WO 98/03484 for the preparation of compounds where A is pyridine, WO 95/00501 and WO 97/14691 for the preparation, among others, of compounds where A is 5H-2-furanone or thiophene, WO 99/62884 for the preparation of compounds where A is 4,5-dihydropyrazole, and WO 99/64415 and WO 01/83475 for the preparation of compounds where R⁴ is a ring.

In certain cases, as for example in the case of compounds of formula Ic, the compounds of formula I can be directly obtained as a salt. Alternatively, the salts of compounds of formula I can be prepared by conventional methods by treatment of a compound of formula I with a sufficient amount of a base such as for example sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, calcium hydroxide or calcium carbonate. In the case of compounds of formula I which may contain basic nitrogen(s), salts thereof can also be obtained by treatment with an acid such as for example hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, nitric acid, oxalic acid or methanesulfonic acid. In addition, the salts of compounds of formula I can be transformed into other salts of compounds of formula I by ion exchange using an ion exchange resin.

As mentioned above, the compounds of the present invention act by inhibiting the cyclooxygenase-2 enzyme (COX-2). Therefore, they are useful for the treatment or prevention of inflammation, pain and/or fever associated with a wide range of diseases or pathologies. Thus, the compounds of the present invention are useful for the treatment or prevention of, among others, pain resulting from surgery or dental surgery; low back and neck pain; headache; toothache; pain associated with cancer; neuralgia; arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis and juvenile arthritis; degenerative joint diseases, including osteoarthritis; gout; ankylosing spondylitis; tendinitis; pain and/or inflammation associated with

traumatismes such as sprains, strains and other similar injuries, such as those produced during sport performance; synovitis; myositis; dysmenorrhea; inflammatory bowel disease (including ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease); ocular inflammatory diseases, including conjunctivitis and endophthalmitis; 5 corneal transplants; skin inflammatory diseases, including psoriasis, burns, eczema and dermatitis; systemic inflammatory processes, including sepsis and pancreatitis; bursitis; lupus erythematosus; common cold; rheumatic fever; and symptoms associated with influenza or other viral infections.

The compounds of the present invention can also be useful for the treatment of other pathologies mediated by COX-2. For example, the compounds 10 of formula I can inhibit cell proliferation and consequently they can be useful for the treatment or prevention of preneoplastic disorders such as familial adenomatous polyposis as well as for the treatment or prevention of cancer, especially those cancers that produce prostaglandins or that express 15 cyclooxygenase. The compounds of the invention can be useful for the treatment for example of liver, bladder, pancreas, ovary, prostate, cervix, lung, breast and skin cancer, and especially gastrointestinal cancers such as colon cancer.

The compounds of the present invention can also inhibit prostanoid-induced smooth muscle contraction and thus may also be useful for the prevention of preterm labour, and for the prevention or treatment of asthma and 20 bronchitis. Other uses of the compounds of formula I include the treatment or prevention of cerebral infarction, epilepsy, type I diabetes and neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, as well as the treatment or prevention of 25 vascular diseases with an inflammatory component such as atherosclerosis.

Moreover, the compounds of the present invention may also be used for treating inflammation in diseases such as migraine, periarteritis nodosa, thyroiditis, aplastic anaemia, Hodgkin's disease, scleroderma, myasthenia gravis, sarcoidosis, nephrotic syndrome, Behçet's syndrome, polymyositis, 30 hypersensitivity and gingivitis.

Besides being useful for human therapy, the compounds of the invention are also useful for veterinary therapy, e.g. of companion animals, exotic animals and farm animals.

According to the activity of the products herein described, the present

invention also relates to compositions which contain a compound of the present invention, together with one or more excipients or other auxiliary agents if necessary. The compounds of the present invention can be administered in the form of any pharmaceutical formulation, the nature of which, as it is well known, will depend upon the nature of the active compound and its route of administration. The compounds of the present invention are useful to be administered by any route of administration, for example by oral, topical, ocular or parenteral route. However, given their good solubility, the compounds of the invention are particularly suitable to be administered by parenteral route.

Injectable preparations of the compounds of the present invention for their parenteral administration comprise sterile solutions, suspensions or emulsions, in an aqueous or non-aqueous solvent such as propylene glycol, polyethylene glycol or vegetable oils. These compositions can also contain coadjuvants, such as wetting, preserving, emulsifying and dispersing agents. They may be sterilized by any known method or prepared as sterile solid compositions which will be dissolved in water or any other sterile injectable medium immediately before use. It is also possible to start from sterile materials and keep them under these conditions throughout all the manufacturing process.

Solid compositions for oral administration include tablets, granulates and capsules. In any case the manufacturing method is based on a simple mixture, dry granulation or wet granulation of the active compound with excipients. These excipients can be, for example, diluents such as lactose, microcrystalline cellulose, mannitol or calcium hydrogenphosphate; binding agents such as for example starch, gelatin or polyvinylpyrrolidone; disintegrants such as sodium carboxymethyl starch or sodium croscarmellose; and lubricating agents such as for example magnesium stearate, stearic acid or talc. Tablets can be additionally coated with suitable excipients by using known techniques with the purpose of delaying their disintegration and absorption in the gastrointestinal tract and thereby provide a sustained action over a longer period, or simply to improve their organoleptic properties or their stability. The active compound can also be incorporated by coating onto inert *pellets* using natural or synthetic film-coating agents. Soft gelatin capsules are also possible, in which the active compound is mixed with water or an oily medium, for example coconut oil, liquid paraffin or olive oil.

Powders and granulates for the preparation of oral suspensions by the addition of water can be obtained by mixing the active compound with dispersing or wetting agents; suspending agents and preservatives. Other excipients can also be added, for example sweetening, flavouring and colouring agents.

5 Liquid forms for oral administration include emulsions, solutions, suspensions, syrups and elixirs containing commonly-used inert diluents, such as distilled water, ethanol, sorbitol, glycerol, polyethylene glycols and propylene glycol. Said compositions can also contain coadjuvants such as wetting, suspending, sweetening, flavouring, preserving agents and buffers.

10 A compound of the invention can also be formulated for its topical application for the treatment of pathologies occurring in areas or organs accessible through this route, such as eyes, skin and the intestinal tract. Formulations include creams, lotions, gels, powders, solutions and patches wherein the compound is dispersed or dissolved in suitable excipients.

15 The activity of the compounds of the present invention can be determined using the following tests:

Test 1.- Rat carrageenan-induced paw edema assay

20 Male Sprague Dawley rats (150-175 g) are used. The animals are fasted during 18 hours prior to the experiment and kept with water *ad libitum*, and are randomly distributed into the different groups of treatment. Inflammation is induced by injecting 0.1 mL of 1% λ -carrageenan solution (Sigma) to the animals' right hindpaw, and the inflammatory response (increase in paw volume) is measured with a plethysmometer (UGO BASILE). Paw volumes are measured
25 just before the administration of test compounds and at 1, 2, 3 and 4 hours after the injection of carrageenan. The compounds are administered through the tail vein, dissolved in DMSO and saline (1 mL/Kg), 10 minutes before the injection of carrageenan. At the same time, 5 mL of water are administered by the oral route in order to facilitate hydration and subsequent inflammatory reaction. The
30 percentages of inhibition of the different treatments tested are calculated by comparing the area under the curve obtained for the treated animals versus the one obtained for the control group. Said areas are obtained by integration from a graphical representation of paw volume versus time.

The results obtained with representative compounds of the present

invention are shown in the following table, where the % of inhibition of inflammation at a dose of 3 mg/kg i.v. of test compound are reported.

No. Example	% inhibition (3 mg/kg)
1	20.7
4	23.3
6	34.8

- 5 The compounds of the invention can also be evaluated in this model when administered by the oral route.

Test 2.- Air pouch model of inflammation in the rat

- 10 This model allows to evaluate COX-2 inhibition *in vivo*. Male Lewis rats (175-200 g), randomly distributed into the different groups of treatment, are used. Air cavities (pouches) are produced to each group by subcutaneous and interscapular injection of 20 mL of sterile air. To keep the air pouch open, 10 mL of air is further administered to each group every two days. Seven days after the first air injection, 2 mL of 1% λ -carrageenan solution (Sigma) is administered to
- 15 each group into the air pouch to produce an inflammatory reaction. The test compound is administered orally 30 min before the carrageenan injection. Animals are killed 6 hours later and the exudate volume is measured. The exudate is centrifuged at 1200 x g at 4 °C for 5 min, and the PGE₂ concentration in the supernatant is determined by using a specific enzymatic immunoassay
- 20 technique.

 The compounds of the invention can also be evaluated in this model when administered by the intravenous route.

Test 3.- Rat carrageenan-induced hyperalgesia test

- 25 Male Sprague Dawley rats, randomly distributed into the different groups of treatment, are used. Inflammation is induced by injection of a carrageenan suspension (0.75 mg per paw in 0.05 mL of saline) into the animals' right hind foot pad. One hour 45 min later the test compounds are administered by intravenous route. Two hours after carrageenan injection, hyperalgesia is induced

at different times in both hindpaws by using a heat source. At each time, the time of latency till the withdrawal of the paw from the heat source is determined for the control group (vehicle) and the treatment groups, and the result is expressed as the increase of the latency time of the inflammed paw of the treated group versus the control group.

The compound of example 6 administered at a dose of 3 mg/Kg showed a significant analgesic activity in this model, especially at 120 min after administration.

The following examples illustrate, but do not limit, the scope of the present invention. The following abbreviations have been used in the examples:

ACN: acetonitrile

EtOAc: ethyl acetate

AcOH: acetic acid

EtOH: ethanol

MeOH: methanol

PrⁱOH: isopropanol

THF: tetrahydrofuran

EXAMPLE 1

Diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

To a solution of 4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide (2 g, 5.2 mmol) (obtained as described in WO 00/23426) in 1N NaOH (7.2 mL) (pH 13.4) under argon atmosphere, a solution of diethyl chlorophosphate (5.2 mL, 36.4 mmol) in THF (28 mL) was added dropwise over 5 min. In order to keep the reaction mixture soluble during all the addition process, some drops of 2N NaOH were added each time the reaction mixture became turbid. Once the addition was finished (pH 8), the resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature for 1 h, treated with EtOAc and the phases were separated. The organic phase was extracted with a NaOH solution having pH 7-8, the phases were separated and the extracted aqueous phase, combined with the previous one, was brought to pH 4 and extracted with EtOAc. The extracted

organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated to dryness, to afford 2 g of the title compound of the example (74% yield).

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ δ TMS): 1.29 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 6 H), 2.0 (broad signal, H₂O + NH), 3.90 (s, 3 H), 4.12 (m, 4 H), 6.93 (m, 3 H), 7.23 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2 H), 7.63 (s, 1 H), 8.02 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2 H).

Elemental analysis calculated for C₂₀H₂₂ClN₃O₆PS: C 46.38%; H 4.28%; N 8.11%. Found: C 46.54%; H 4.37%; N 7.82%.

EXAMPLE 2

Diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate sodium salt

To a suspension of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate (1 g, 1.9 mmol) (obtained in example 1) in EtOH (35 mL), NaOH powder (76 mg, 1.9 mmol) in EtOH (4 mL) was added, and the resulting mixture was stirred under argon atmosphere and at room temperature for 1 h. The mixture was concentrated to dryness and the resulting solid was recrystallized from PrOH (20 mL), to afford the title compound of the example as a white solid (0.88 g; 86% yield).

Elemental analysis calculated for C₂₀H₂₁ClFN₃NaO₆PS.0.5H₂O: C 43.76%; H 4.01%; N 7.65%. Found: C 43.72%; H 3.63%; N 7.58%.

EXAMPLE 3

Diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate potassium salt

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 2, but using KOH instead of NaOH, the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid (48% yield).

Elemental analysis calculated for C₂₀H₂₁ClFKN₃O₆PS.0.5H₂O: C 42.51%; H 4.04%; N 7.43%. Found: C 42.40%; H 3.65%; N 7.35%.

EXAMPLE 4

Ethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate sodium salt

To a suspension of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate (1 g, 1.9 mmol) (obtained in example 1) in acetone (14 mL) under argon, NaI (284 mg, 1.9 mmol)

was added, and the resulting mixture was stirred at reflux overnight. It was concentrated to dryness and the crude product obtained was purified by chromatography on silica gel using EtOAc/MeOH/AcOH mixtures of increasing polarity as eluent. The product obtained was next recrystallized from PrOH to afford 554 mg of the title compound of the example (57% yield).

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ + CD₃OD δ TMS): 1.20 (m, 3 H), 3.74 (m, 2 H), 3.90 (s, 3 H), 4.30 (s, H₂O + NH), 6.95 (m, 3 H), 7.29 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2 H), 7.74 (s, 1 H), 8.06 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2 H).

Elemental analysis calculated for C₁₈H₁₇ClFN₃NaO₆PS.0.5H₂O: C 41.50%; H 3.46%; N 8.06%. Found: C 41.31%; H 3.71%; N 7.27%.

EXAMPLE 5

Ethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate potassium salt

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 4, but using potassium iodide instead of sodium iodide, the title compound of the example was obtained in 29% yield.

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ + CD₃OD δ TMS): 1.11 (m, 3 H), 3.71 (m, 2 H), 3.85 (s, 3 H), 4.15 (s, H₂O + NH), 6.90 (m, 3 H), 7.23 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 2 H), 7.68 (s, 1 H), 8.00 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 2 H).

Elemental analysis calculated for C₁₈H₁₇ClFN₃O₆PS.1H₂O: C 39.60%; H 3.48%; N 7.69%. Found: C 39.40%; H 3.27%; N 7.56%.

EXAMPLE 6

N-[4-[4-Chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid

Method A

To a suspension of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate (1 g, 1.92 mmol) (obtained in example 1) in CH₂Cl₂ (22 mL), cooled to 0 °C and under argon atmosphere, iodotrimethylsilane (1.3 mL, 9.6 mmol) was added dropwise, and the resulting mixture was stirred at 0 °C for 1 h. Then, the mixture was concentrated to dryness and the residue obtained was treated with a mixture of acetone (22 mL) and H₂O (0.76 mL). The resulting mixture was first stirred at 0 °C for 1 h and then at room temperature overnight. A solid precipitated, which was collected by

filtration, washed with acetone and dried. The title compound of the example was obtained in 80% yield (0.7 g).

Method B

To a suspension of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate (0.12 g, 0.23 mmol) (obtained in example 1) in ACN (1 mL), bromotrimethylsilane (0.3 mL, 2.3 mmol) was added dropwise and under argon atmosphere, and the resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature overnight. The mixture was concentrated to dryness and the residue obtained was dried and then stirred in H₂O (0.167 mL) for 1 h. EtOH (1.67 mL) was added and the mixture was further stirred for half an hour and was then kept overnight at 4 °C. A solid precipitated, which was collected by filtration and dried, affording 65 mg of the title compound of the example (61% yield).

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ + CD₃OD δ TMS): 3.91 (s, 3 H), 4.46 (s, H₂O + 3 H), 6.95 (m, 3 H), 7.31 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2 H), 7.78 (s, 1 H), 8.04 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2 H). Elemental analysis calculated for C₁₆H₁₄ClFN₃O₆PS: C 41.61%; H 3.06%; N 9.10%. Found: C 41.22%; H 2.75%; N 9.20%.

EXAMPLE 7

Trisodium N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 2, but using N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid (obtained in example 6) instead of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate and 3 equivalents of NaOH instead of 1, and recrystallizing then the crude product obtained from PrOH, the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid.

Elemental analysis calculated for C₁₆H₁₁ClFN₃Na₃O₆PS.2H₂O: C 34.10%; H 2.65%; N 7.45%. Found: C 33.91%; H 2.25%; N 6.90%.

EXAMPLE 8

Tripotassium N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 7, but using 3 equivalents of KOH instead of 3 equivalents of NaOH, and recrystallizing the

crude product obtained from EtOH, the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid.

Elemental analysis calculated for $C_{16}H_{11}ClFK_3N_3O_6PS \cdot H_2O$: C 32.32%; H 2.19%; N 7.07%. Found: C 32.06%; H 2.09%; N 6.62%.

5.

EXAMPLE 9**Dipotassium N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate**

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 8, but using 2 equivalents of KOH instead of 3, and recrystallizing the crude product obtained from EtOH, the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid.

Elemental analysis calculated for $C_{16}H_{12}ClFK_2N_3O_6PS \cdot H_2O$: C 34.56%; H 2.52%; N 7.55%; S 5.76%. Found: C 34.22%; H 2.31%; N 7.35%; S 5.52%.

EXAMPLE 10**Calcium N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate**

A suspension of N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid (0.3 g, 0.65 mmol) (obtained in example 6) and $CaCO_3$ (66 mg, 0.66 mmol) in H_2O (38 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 1 h. A white solid was formed, which was collected by filtration, washed with

H_2O and dried, to afford the title compound of the example in 71% yield.

Elemental analysis calculated for $C_{16}H_{12}CaClFN_3O_6PS \cdot 2.5H_2O$: C 35.13%; H 3.11%; N 7.68%. Found: C 34.82%; H 3.43%; N 7.17%.

EXAMPLE 11**Tricalcium di-[N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate]**

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 7, but using 1.5 equivalents of $Ca(OH)_2$ instead of 3 equivalents of NaOH, and recrystallizing the crude product obtained from EtOH, the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid (85% yield).

Elemental analysis calculated for $C_{32}H_{22}Ca_3Cl_2F_2N_6O_{12}P_2S_2$: C 32.35%; H 2.21%; N 7.07%. Found: C 32.27%; H 2.40%; N 6.85%.

EXAMPLE 12

Diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

a) 4-[4-Chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide sodium salt

5 To a suspension of 4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide (1 g, 2.89 mmol) (obtained as described in WO 00/23426) in EtOH (55 mL), NaOH powder (115 mg, 2.89 mmol) was added under argon atmosphere, and the resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature for 2 h. The mixture was concentrated to dryness and a crude product was obtained, 10 which was directly used in the following reaction.

b) Title compound

 To a suspension of 4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide sodium salt (2.89 mmol) (obtained in the preceding section) in THF (12 mL), diethyl chlorophosphate (0.42 mL, 2.89 mmol) was 15 added under argon atmosphere. The resulting solution was stirred at room temperature for 15 days. It was then concentrated to dryness and the resulting residue was partitioned between H₂O and EtOAc, the suspension was filtered and the phases separated. The organic phase was dried and concentrated to afford a solid which was purified by chromatography on silica gel using mixtures 20 hexane/EtOAc and EtOAc/MeOH of increasing polarity as eluent. The product obtained was then recrystallized from ACN to afford the title compound of the example as a yellowish solid (15% yield).

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ δ TMS): 1.34 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 6 H), 1.47 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3 H), 2.0 (broad signal, NH), 4.08 (q, J = 7.0 Hz, 2 H), 4.17 (m, 4 H), 6.90 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2 H), 7.15 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2 H), 7.31 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2 H), 7.69 (s, 1 H), 8.04 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2 H). 25

 Elemental analysis calculated for C₂₁H₂₅ClN₃O₆PS.0.25H₂O: C 48.65%; H 5.01%; N 8.10%. Found: C 48.59%; H 4.89%; N 8.08%.

EXAMPLE 13

30 **N-[4-[4-Chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid**

 Following a similar procedure to that described in method A of example 6, but starting from diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-

yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate (obtained in example 12) instead of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]-phosphoramidate, the title compound of the example was obtained in 63% yield.

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ + CD₃OD δ TMS): 1.37 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3 H), 4.00 (q, J = 7.0, 2 H), 4.30 (s, H₂O + 3 H), 6.82 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2 H), 7.07 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2 H), 7.25 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.72 (s, 1 H), 7.97 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2 H).

Elemental analysis calculated for C₁₇H₁₇ClN₃O₆PS.0.25H₂O: C 44.16%; H 3.79%; N 9.08%. Found: C 44.17%; H 3.65%; N 9.10%.

EXAMPLE 14

10 Diphenyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

Following a similar procedure to that described in sections a and b of example 12, but using 4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide (obtained as described in WO 00/23426) instead of 4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide and diphenyl chlorophosphate instead of diethyl chlorophosphate, the title compound of the example was obtained in 10% yield.

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ δ TMS): 2.0 (broad signal, NH), 3.94 (s, 3 H), from 6.88 to 7.11 (m, 16 H), 7.93 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 2 H).

20 Elemental analysis calculated for C₂₈H₂₂ClFN₃O₆PS.H₂O: C 51.15%; H 3.83%; N 6.65%. Found: C 51.15%; H 3.46%; N 5.92%.

EXAMPLE 15

Diphenyl N-[4-[4-Chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate sodium salt

25 Following a similar procedure to that described in example 2, but starting from diphenyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate (obtained in example 14) instead of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]-phosphoramidate and without recrystallizing the crude product obtained, the title compound of the example was obtained in quantitative yield.

30 Elemental analysis calculated for C₂₈H₂₁ClFN₃NaO₆PS.3.5H₂O: C 47.98%; H 4.05%; N 5.89%. Found: C 47.98%; H 3.38%; N 5.49%.

EXAMPLE 16

Dimethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 1, but using dimethyl chlorophosphate instead of diethyl chlorophosphate and recrystallizing the crude product obtained from Pr^tOH , the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid.

$^1\text{H-NMR}$ (300 MHz, CDCl_3 δ TMS): 2.0 (broad signal, $\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{NH}$), 3.78 (s, 3 H), 3.81 (s, 3 H), 3.95 (s, 3 H), 6.95 (m, 3 H), 7.32 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2 H), 7.70 (s, 1 H), 8.07 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2 H).

Elemental analysis calculated for $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{18}\text{ClFN}_3\text{O}_6\text{PS} \cdot 0.5\text{H}_2\text{O}$: C 43.33%; H 3.81%; N 8.42%. Found: C 43.62%; H 3.66%; N 8.13%.

EXAMPLE 17

Dimethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate sodium salt

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 2, but starting from dimethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate (obtained in example 16) instead of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate, the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid (45% yield).

Elemental analysis calculated for $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{17}\text{ClFN}_3\text{NaO}_6\text{PS} \cdot 1\text{H}_2\text{O}$: C 40.79%; H 3.59%; N 7.93%. Found: C 40.96%; H 3.72%; N 7.57%.

EXAMPLE 18

Dimethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate potassium salt

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 17, but using KOH instead of NaOH, the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid (79% yield).

Elemental analysis calculated for $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{17}\text{ClFKN}_3\text{O}_6\text{PS}$: C 40.95%; H 3.25%; N 7.96%. Found: C 41.24%; H 3.15%; N 7.95%.

EXAMPLE 19

Methyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate sodium salt

Following a similar procedure to that described in example 4 but starting from dimethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate instead of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate, the title compound of the example was obtained as a white solid (79% yield).

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ + CD₃OD δ TMS): 3.33 (m, 3 H), 4.36 (s, H₂O + NH), 3.85 (s, 3 H), 6.95 (m, 3 H), 7.24 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2 H), 7.72 (s, 1 H), 8.01 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2 H).

Elemental analysis calculated for C₁₇H₁₅ClFN₃NaO₆PS.0.4Pr¹OH: C 41.88%; H 3.50%; N 8.05%. Found: C 41.88%; H 3.64%; N 7.83%.

EXAMPLE 20

Diethyl N-[4-[5-(p-tolyl)-3-(trifluoromethyl)pyrazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

Following a similar procedure to that described in sections a and b of example 12, but starting from 4-[5-(p-tolyl)-3-(trifluoromethyl)pyrazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide (obtained as described in WO 95/15316) instead of 4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide, and washing the product thus obtained with diethyl ether instead of recrystallizing it from ACN, the title compound of the example was obtained as a yellowish solid.

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ δ TMS): 1.16 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 6 H), 2, 0 (broad signal, NH), 2.34 (s, 3 H), 3.95 (m, 4 H), 6.70 (s, 1 H), 7.10 (AB quartet, Δν = 0.043, J = 8.2 Hz, 4 H), 7.34 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2 H), 7.97 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2 H).

EXAMPLE 21

N-[4-[5-(p-Tolyl)-3-(trifluoromethyl)pyrazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid

Following a similar procedure to that described in method A of example 6 but starting from diethyl N-[4-[5-(p-tolyl)-3-(trifluoromethyl)pyrazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate instead of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate, the title compound of the example is obtained.

EXAMPLE 22

Diethyl N-[4-(5-methyl-3-phenylisoxazol-4-yl)phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

Following a similar procedure to that described in sections a and b of example 12, but starting from 4-(5-methyl-3-phenylisoxazol-4-yl)benzenesulfonamide (obtained as described in WO 96/25405) instead of 4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide, and recrystallizing the product thus obtained from an EtOAc/hexane mixture instead of ACN, the title compound of the example was obtained as a yellowish solid.

¹H-NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃ δ TMS): 1.33 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 6 H), 2, 0 (broad signal, NH), 2.53 (s, 3 H), 4.17 (m, 4 H), 7.39 (m, 7 H), 8.02 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2 H).

Elemental analysis calculated for C₂₀H₂₃N₂O₆PS.1.5H₂O: C 50.31%; H 5.45%; N 5.86%. Found: C 50.63%; H 5.39%; N 5.65%.

EXAMPLE 23

N-[4-(5-methyl-3-phenylisoxazol-4-yl)phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid

Following a similar procedure to that described in method A of example 6, but starting from diethyl N-[4-(5-methyl-3-phenylisoxazol-4-yl)phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate instead of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate, the title compound of the example is obtained.

EXAMPLE 24

Diethyl N-[4-[4-cyclohexyl-2-methyloxazol-5-yl]-2-fluorophenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate

Following a similar procedure to that described in sections a and b of example 12, but starting from 4-[4-cyclohexyl-2-methyloxazol-5-yl]-2-fluorobenzenesulfonamide (obtained as described in EP 745596) instead of 4-[4-chloro-5-(4-ethoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]benzenesulfonamide, the title compound of the example is obtained.

EXAMPLE 25

N-[4-[4-Cyclohexyl-2-methyloxazol-5-yl]-2-fluorophenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidic acid

Following a similar procedure to that described in method A of example 6, but starting from diethyl N-[4-[4-cyclohexyl-2-methyloxazol-5-yl]-2-fluorophenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate instead of diethyl N-[4-[4-chloro-5-(3-fluoro-4-methoxyphenyl)imidazol-1-yl]phenylsulfonyl]phosphoramidate, the title compound of the example is obtained.